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THE JOURNAL OF POLITICAL ECONOMY

VOLUME 20

MARCH—1912

NUMBER 3

THE SOCIALIST PARTY IN THE NOVEMBER ELECTIONS

I

In the November elections just past the Socialist party continued, at an accelerated rate, its conquest of political power. Conservatively estimated no fewer than 642¹ party members were at this time voted into public offices of various degrees of importance. This number exceeds by more than one hundred the combined Socialist election successes thus far recorded in the years 1908, 1909, 1910, and in the spring of 1911. The significance of this result is considerably enhanced when it is understood that in the fall of 1911 no general municipal elections took place in what previous study had indicated to be the main strongholds of Socialism, and that more than 85 per cent of these new office-holders were elected in states which had heretofore returned few or no Socialist officials and in municipalities new in the Socialist ranks.

¹ The basis upon which this calculation is made differs somewhat from that used in a previous study called "The Rising Tide of Socialism," published in the *Journal of Political Economy* for October, 1911. In that study all unverified election claims, however probable, were excluded. Since its publication such a large proportion of unverified claims have been substantiated that it has seemed advisable in the present case to base estimates upon reasonable probability rather than upon absolute verification. All election figures given in the present text, therefore, are to be understood as statements of this nature. The figures here given concerning the period before November, 1911, will be found to differ frequently from those recorded in the previous study. These differences are due both to the change in basis of calculation and to the results of investigation carried on since last October. It is to be understood further that the phrase "November elections" here used refers to the general election period just past. This period includes November and December, 1911, and January and

In brief, the case therefore stands thus: in this latest election period, with a relatively small number of states participating except by way of special elections, in apparently "unsocialized" territory, in a new group of municipalities, the Socialist party has at a bound considerably more than doubled its political power. The result is a present roll of not less than 1,141 Socialist office-holders in 36 states of the Union and some 324 municipalities.

This demonstration of Socialist power presents several salient features noteworthy as indicative of the real strength, character, and tendencies of the movement.

The impression of power thus conveyed is somewhat weakened by a knowledge of the functional character of the officers just elected. Of the 642 successful Socialist candidates but four represent areas larger than the county, three of these being members of state legislatures and one a delegate to a state constitutional convention. This result is in part due to the peculiar character of the elections; but the fact remains that outside the single state of Wisconsin the Socialist party is still in the main effective only as a municipal force. Moreover, the rank of the municipal officers recently elected is not on the whole above if up to the standard of significance previously set. Of the new officials 27 are mayors and village presidents, 211 councilmen, aldermen, and village or township trustees, 4 city commissioners, 5 charter-revision commissioners, while 67 others may be considered to occupy major municipal positions. Of the remainder 47 are assessors, 79 are school officers, and 60 are connected with the work of justice and police. Approximately one-half, therefore, of the new Socialist

February, 1912. It is possible that certain of the results reported during this period had reference to elections held earlier. Nothing in this connection has been taken for granted but it has not always been possible to establish dates beyond the possibility of doubt. The present study, like the previous one, represents the results obtained from about 600 letters of inquiry sent out to members of all parties in the places where Socialist election successes were claimed. The writer has had access also to the correspondence and records of the office of the national secretary of the Socialist party, and has secured information and assistance from various other sources. Though all possible effort has been made to secure accuracy and completeness of information it is expected that further investigation will modify the present statements and conclusions. The difficulties connected with a study of this kind are very great, and what is here offered should be understood to be in the nature of a trial statement only.

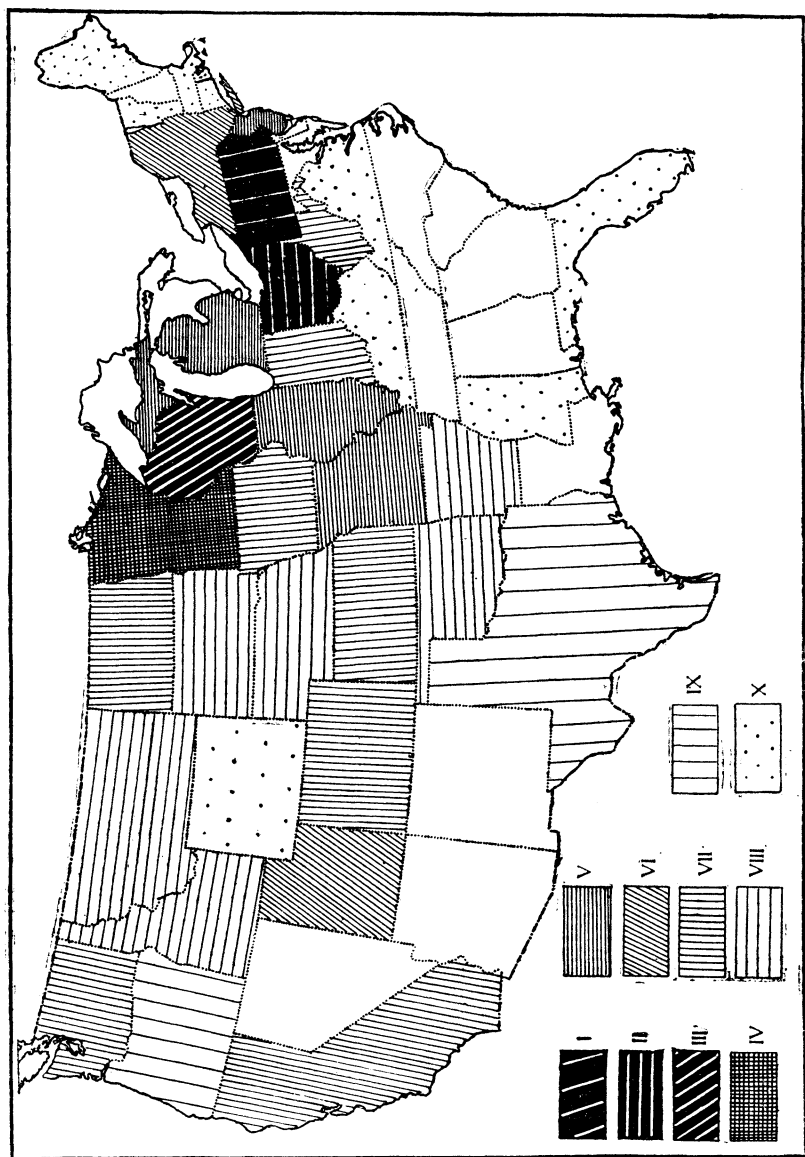
strength is represented by minor local officials, a considerable proportion of whom are judges, inspectors of elections, and the like. Beyond this it is to be said that the actual municipal control secured by the Socialists through the recent elections is not greatly enhanced. Not above 8 municipalities were actually captured by the party. None of these are to be compared in importance with Milwaukee, and 4 of the 8 are to be classified as rural communities.¹

In the territorial distribution of Socialist power, however, the fall returns indicated a very marked and significant change, which tends decidedly to enhance the notion of the party's national strength and possibilities. As shown by the accompanying map and charts the center of gravity of the Socialist political system was shifted most decidedly to the East. On the basis of both "socialized" communities and the number of party members in office, two eastern states—Pennsylvania and Ohio—far outstripped all previous records of party successes at the polls. Wisconsin, which before held undisputed pre-eminence in this respect, falls to the position of a poor third.² Moreover New York, chiefly by virtue of the sweeping victory in Schenectady, takes an important place in the Socialist movement, while New Jersey, Indiana, and West Virginia advance to positions of respectable rank. This shifting of Socialist power, however, is easily capable of overemphasis. It was without doubt due in part to the absence of general elections

¹ The most conspicuous cases of success in the last elections were the following:

MUNICIPALITY	POPULATION	OFFICERS ELECTED			
		Mayor	Councilmen	Others	Total
Schenectady, N.Y.	72,826	1	8	17	26
New Castle, Pa.	36,280	1	11	4	16
Martin's Ferry, Ohio.	9,133	1	7 or 9	11 or 9	19
St. Mary's, Ohio.	5,732	1	11	8	20
Eureka, Utah.	3,416	1	4	2	7
Adamston, W. Va.	1,200	1	5	1	7
Edmonds, Wash.	1,114	1	4	3	8
Mineral City, Ohio.	1,032	1	5	7	13
Star City, W. Va.	318	1	5	1	7

² In point of effective strength, however, Wisconsin may perhaps still be considered as the leading Socialist state, since it not only has within its borders the most important municipality controlled by the party but is the only state in which the Socialists have any considerable extra-municipal power in the way of state offices.



Map showing the geographical distribution of Socialist officials. The states are grouped in ten classes. The comparative intensity of shading for the several classes, as shown in the scheme appended to the map, indicates the relative numbers of Socialist officials in office in each state.

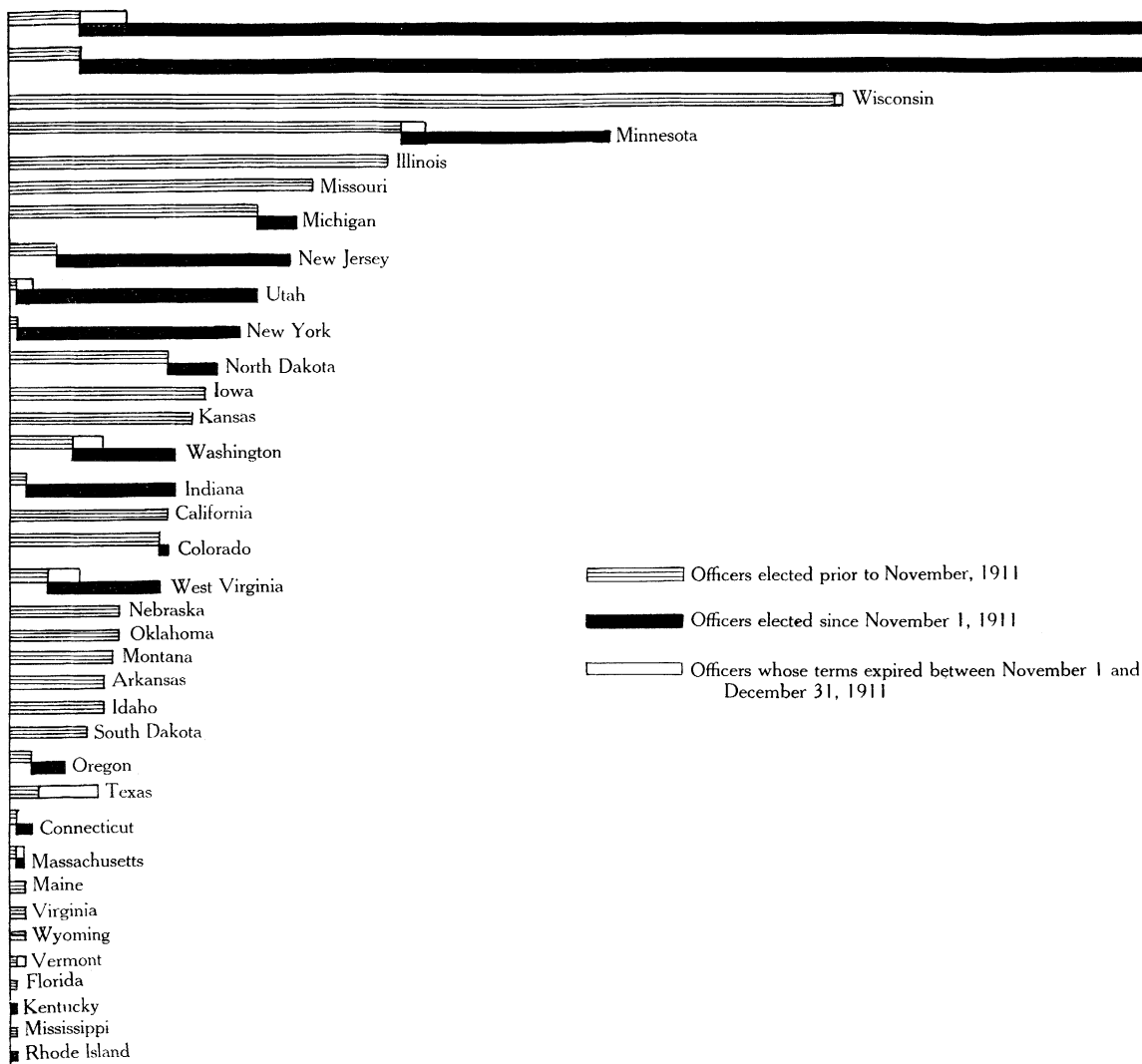


CHART I.—Showing by states the relative numbers

Ohio Pennsylvania

and

relative numbers of elected Socialists in office.

in the old Middle-West Socialist strongholds and in part to the somewhat disappointing and adventitious results in the far western states where Utah alone attained any conspicuous success.¹ The Middle West may still, with reason, be looked upon as the chief seat of Socialist power; and the eastern development is to be

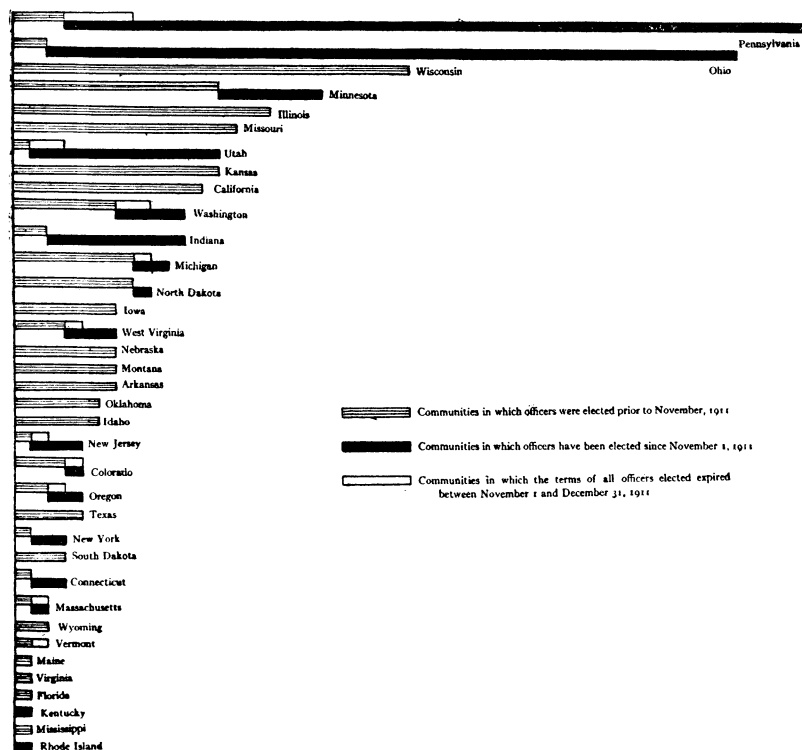


CHART II.—Showing by states the relative numbers of communities in which elected Socialists are in office.

regarded mainly as strikingly emphasizing the general growth of that power and the general pervasiveness of Socialist sentiment.

¹ Utah ranks third in the recent election results, claiming 11 "socialized" communities and 30 elected officers. This state has, however, no very remarkable Socialist strength, for while it contributed 5 of the new Socialist mayors, the communities in which they were elected were in the majority of cases rural and the results turned in several places on non-Socialist issues.

Another noteworthy change connected with the fall returns concerns the municipal distribution of elected officers. Two points here stand out in relief. First, to a considerably greater extent than before the Socialist victories were won in distinctively large and industrial communities; and secondly, the elected officers instead of being, as heretofore, prevailingly scattering, are to a considerable degree massed in particular regions and in particular municipalities. Four hundred and sixty-two, or approximately 72 per cent, of the newly elected officers represent the two industrial states, Pennsylvania and Ohio. Of the 40 "socialized" municipalities in Ohio 15 have a population of 10,000 or over, 23 have more than 5,000 inhabitants, and 27, or $67\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, would be classified in the census as urban communities.¹ In Pennsylvania the case is not quite so strong, but here 19 of the 43 municipalities have a population of over 5,000 and more than 50 per cent are urban in character. Taking the whole 134 communities in which the Socialists succeeded in the last elections, 37 show a population exceeding 10,000, 78 fall below 5,000, but only 36 are townships, or cities and villages with a population under 1,000. Seventy-three, or over 54 per cent, are urban communities. In the preceding elections out of 190 communities only 37 had a population of over 10,000, 136 fall below 5,000, 77 are townships, or cities and villages with a population under 1,000, while only 80, or 42 per cent, are urban in character.

The comparison of industrial character shows a still greater change. Of the communities concerned in the last elections which reported their industrial character, manufacturing was a conspicuous factor in approximately 67 per cent, railroading and lake shipping in 30 per cent, mining in 19 per cent, and agriculture in only 14 per cent. The corresponding figures for previous elections were: manufactures, $38\frac{1}{2}$ per cent; railroading and lake shipping, 18 per cent; mining, 20 per cent, and agriculture, 45 per cent. These differences are, to be sure, largely accounted for by the fact that the northern central agricultural states did not in general participate in the recent elections; but the later results are a very necessary corrective of any conclusions which may have been drawn

¹In the census, communities having a population of 2,500 and over are classed as urban.

from the earlier ones. It is still apparent that the small town and the strictly rural community play a considerable rôle in the Socialist political advance, but it is much more apparent than before that the bulk of the party's strength is in the industrial and urban centers.

The tendency to massing of Socialist officials is probably the most significant feature of the November election results. Hitherto the party has been woefully lacking in effective power because, apart from a few exceptional cases, its elected candidates have not been in force in particular municipalities. Before last November the average number of Socialist officials to a community was less than 3 and only two places had a body of 10 or more. The recent results show an average of approximately 5 officers to the community, and 13 municipalities were added to the list which have a group of 10 or above. Moreover, these 13 municipalities elected 244, or 38 per cent, of the new Socialist officials, showing thus a most marked tendency toward mass results and consequent really effective political power. This result was the more significant in that 11 of the 13 communities are urban in character, while 7 have residents numbering over 10,000 and 4 rise above the 70,000 mark.

An occupational analysis of the Socialist officials elected in November favors a working-class or proletarian interpretation of the movement as compared with previous results. In the preceding elections 64 successful candidates out of 271 reporting were engaged in some form of profession or business—a percentage of 23. Of 247 officers elected in November whose occupations are given, only 30, or 12 per cent, are so engaged, while 68 per cent are laborers or are following mechanical pursuits. Too much reliance, however, must not be placed on these returns because the desire to emphasize the class character of the party frequently leads Socialists to quibble in regard to the occupations of officers and members.¹

¹ An interesting illustration of this fact occurred in connection with a prominent Socialist elected last fall. This man, who had been a municipal official for ten years and had followed the occupations of collector and of compiler of statistics, was naïvely or with intent to deceive listed as "shoemaker."

The student of Socialist fact encounters many trying difficulties. Not only is there considerable suspicion of the investigator which leads to refusal to impart

There is much evidence, furthermore, of a non-statistical character to indicate that at the present time the real tendency is in the direction of a decided increase of middle-class membership and control in the party.

In this analysis of results the case of Ohio deserves especial consideration.¹ Before last November there were in this state but two "socialized" communities and 9 Socialist officials. When the smoke of battle had cleared away it was found that at least 40 communities had joined the Socialist column, bringing with them not less than 187 official recruits. Fifteen mayors had been elected, and 82 councilmen; Socialist control had been attained in 3 municipalities, and in three others the Socialists secured an even break or a majority in the council; 67.5 per cent of the "socialized" communities were urban, and 62.5 per cent of the officers were elected in such communities. Twenty-three of the 30 municipalities which reported were manufacturing centers; 4 were mining communities; only 3 were predominantly agricultural. The occupations of 127 officers were reported, among whom but 17 were professionals or proprietors. In short, not only has Ohio suddenly taken its place as one of the most important centers of Socialist power, but it appears in a striking way to represent what

information or false reporting on the ground that "it is none of his business," but the average Socialist party office is conducted with a noticeable lack of system and efficiency. This is due partly to the ideals of the rank and file who tend to distrust the man who displays business traits and are prone to put the "spellbinder" into office, and partly to the fear of putting "power" into the hands of officers and thus to the failure to vote sufficient funds for efficient work. The incompatibility of extreme "democracy" and efficiency is the present bane of the Socialist party.

¹ Notwithstanding the fact that Pennsylvania showed more communities in which Socialists were elected and returned a larger number of party officers, the Ohio results are socially much more significant. Several reasons lead to this conclusion: First, the number and proportion of major offices in Ohio is much the greater, since only one mayor and 63 councilmen were elected in Pennsylvania, and since in the latter state a greater proportion of the officers were elected to minor positions; secondly, 3 municipalities fell under Socialist control in Ohio to none in Pennsylvania; thirdly, a larger percentage of the Ohio socialized communities were urban in character. Other reasons might be added. Contrary to what might be inferred, the Pennsylvania victories were characteristically in manufacturing centers rather than in mining communities. It is the miners of American, English, and Welsh stock—those to be found further west—rather than the central and south Europeans, who are distinctly socialistic.

the Socialists call a "good movement." The policy and fortunes of the party in this state should therefore constitute an exceptionally good test of the ideals, effectiveness, and possibilities of Socialism in this country.

The general impression conveyed by a close study of the objective facts of the November election period is that we are at last face to face with a vigorous and effective Socialist movement—a movement which is nation-wide, which is laying the foundation for a permanent structure by building from the bottom of the political system, which is recruiting its main strength in the important civic and industrial centers, and which is growing at a rapidly accelerating rate. It is, however, still too early to speak of this movement as a potent political power in this country or confidently to predict its rapid and permanent rise to political potency. Should the recent progressive advance continue, a decade will see it seriously challenging the supremacy of one or both of the old political parties. This prospect is now operating as a tremendous stimulus to Socialist effort. Through it the party group is being rapidly transformed from a speculative sect, preaching a gospel of far-off revolution, to a crusading army; and from now on the fighting for immediate results will go forward with increasing vigor. And yet in this very prospect of success, in this struggle for immediate power, lies the gravest danger to the success and permanency of the movement—the danger that it will lose its distinctive character and thereby its vital force and appeal to the mass of American voters.

II

Detailed study of the immediate character and causes of Socialist victories in the November elections serves in the main to confirm the impressions created by previous investigation. Yet there are two or three distinctive features of the more recent situation which throw a vivid light on present tendencies and future possibilities.

In the present inquiry the writer was able to secure a fair amount of casual data concerning 61 communities in which Socialists were elected. As before it was found that triumphs of an ultra-theoretical Socialism were conspicuous for their absence. Probably in no case among those examined (there are possible exceptions) was

Socialism, as a definite policy of general public ownership, the issue clearly recognized by both or all of the contending parties. This does not mean that no Socialists were elected because they stood on a straight Socialist platform; for that was frequently the case. But it does mean that in the great majority of such instances the whole electorate was not consciously brought face to face with the issue: shall the city commit itself definitely to Socialist principles?

In fact, specific important local issues and conditions almost everywhere were before the voters to influence their choice of party and candidate. Extravagance and inefficiency, good government and economy, corruption and graft, gang and corporation rule, the personal popularity, honesty, and ability of candidates, individual and party records, commission government, charter revision, public improvements, specific problems of municipal ownership, franchise-granting, the tax rate, bond issues, local option, the enforcement of law against liquor-selling and vice, religious affiliations, ethnical jealousies—all these, as non-Socialist factors, and many others, played their part in the election or defeat of Socialist candidates.

There were, it is true, many cases in which Socialism as such was a straight-out issue with the Socialists, and in the great majority of instances it was placed unequivocally before the electorate by them; but there were relatively few instances in which the general result did not turn to a large degree upon issues which might have been in contest between the representatives of the Republican and Democratic parties.

Nor were these Socialist victories in general the result of definite class divisions and class conflict in the communities concerned. Not that the members of the Socialist party, in the majority of cases, failed to state clearly the doctrine of class conflict and to urge the workingman to cast a class-conscious vote. But in the majority of cases the voters as a whole including many who cast Socialist ballots were not conscious that their votes were to decide a question of working-class domination. Exceptions to this statement were found sometimes where an isolated workman was elected in a distinctively working-class ward or district; in one or two cases where through long continued "organization, agitation, and education" on the part of the Socialists the old parties had come

to recognize the Socialist organization as a grave menace to their continued domination; and where trust methods, strikes, and union-smashing tactics had stirred up for the time bitter class feeling. Even in such instances, however, the vote was not as a whole necessarily class conscious, and ordinarily allegiance to class did not sway the mass of voters.¹

Finally as before a considerable proportion of the Socialist victories must be regarded as in the main fortuitous. Of the 61 cases examined at least 23 or nearly 38 per cent were probably of

¹ The evidence on which are based the foregoing statements in respect to the November elections runs parallel to that which led to similar conclusions from the preceding results and need not, therefore, be repeated here. It will be found summarized in the paper on "The Rising Tide of Socialism" elsewhere alluded to. The following specific illustrations drawn from material bearing on the November results speak for themselves.

"Socialist candidate [for mayor] known by very few voters . . . was very active in Union evangelistic meetings of all the churches. Almost 500 conversions in 4 weeks. . . . He was one of the ushers. The ladies' committee made house-to-house canvass urging people to vote for Dry Candidate and Enforcement of Laws."

"Got the Church vote—the Dry vote—Socialistic vote and being laboring man (Union) got a large Union vote."

The Socialist mayor here referred to published in the local newspaper following the election a signed statement in which he said: "Since I cannot thank personally all of my loyal supporters who irrespective of party have rallied to my support . . . I wish to use this medium to express my hearty appreciation. . . . I will do my utmost to give the people of ——— an honest, clean, business administration."

Of another Socialist mayor a correspondent writes: "The success of Mr. ——— was due solely to his own personality. He is a man far above the average in intelligence, being well read and progressive in his thoughts. He is an ideal Christian gentleman, a steady churchgoer, abstains wholly from the use of intoxicating liquors and tobacco in all forms, and has never been heard to utter an oath. He commands the respect of all voters."

Of the victory of a third Socialist mayor this statement was made: "The large vote for ——— was no Socialist landslide. Most of the people who voted for him paid little attention in my opinion to any political doctrine. There was a strong feeling of dissatisfaction with existing conditions and ——— by his sermons . . . did all he could to strengthen it. He constantly reiterated the promise that if the people would elect him mayor he would 'clean out the city hall from cellar to garret.' Corroborative of this statement the mayor himself writes: "We are owned by capitalists in ——— and ruled by the capitalists in ———. We do not have home rule but the Socialists are fighting for it in order that the city can govern itself."

The two statements following are extracts from letters written by Socialists, one referring to a Pennsylvania, the other to an Ohio, town.

"I would not call the large vote polled in ——— a victory for Socialist principles because there isn't fifty in the town that understand the Socialist principles. Am

this nature, and in ten of these instances the victories turned on altogether trivial matters.

Notwithstanding all this, however, analysis of the causes and character of the November results reveals at least three characteristic features which tend to give to Socialism in this country the appearance of a far more serious and formidable movement than at any previous time.

1. *A significantly larger proportion of the Socialist victories than before were the outcome of systematic "organization, agitation, and education."* This is proved not only by the analysis of evidence but by the nature of the campaign itself. In this there was evident a distinct advance in the extent, character, and effectiveness of the Socialistic election methods. Not only were the Socialists locally, in the main, more alert and enthusiastic than in previous elections of this kind,¹ but local efforts were more strongly supplemented enclosing a clipping of the vote in ——— township and I would stake my last dollar that not one of the sixty-three that voted the Socialist ticket knows anything about 'Surplus value' or 'Economic determinism.' The people are tired of being humbugged by the Democratic and Republican parties is the real cause of the Socialist success."

"I hope you will excuse me for the liberty I take in sending you a few inside facts concerning our election. It was practically a fight between the K. of P. and the K. of C. . . . and as our candidate for mayor is a member of the K. of P. and other lodges he won out."

This statement concerns another Ohio Socialist victory: "It was a rebuke to the mayor, who had served one term, for the manner in which he had conducted the affairs of the office and a warning to the immoral not to try to get a position of public trust here, and a declaration that the hands of a clean man will be upheld regardless of his politics."

In an Indiana town four men were elected on the Socialist ticket. Three were not party members but were "Socialists at heart." The situation is thus described in part: "Then the railroad men of different party affiliations nominated a ticket placing ——— (who was known as a Socialist) on the ticket for Marshal, that being the particular officer over which the fight occurred and denominated it Socialist, and as had taken time to think over candidates having two other tickets in the field they were fortunate in getting good men nominated and was endorsed by all parties."

It is significant that of the 27 Socialist mayors elected, 4 went into office where no other Socialist candidate survived and 9 others were accompanied by only two Socialist comrades. It is also significant that as in the previous elections there were many cases where the vote of the organized workers was divided.

¹ This statement is amply supported by the evidence. Statements similar to the following frequently occurred:

"I will say however that their Socialist society is thoroughly alive and contributes more money and does more work ten times over than both of the old parties combined."

and systematically aided by state and national organizations. An enormous amount of literature was sent out from the office of the national secretary of the party and distributed at campaign meetings, and from house to house.¹ Contributions were solicited and expended in hard-pressed quarters. Special campaign periodicals were published: a central syndicate with headquarters in Ohio is said to have operated a chain of 130 local periodicals. Lecture bureaus were established which directed the movements of corps lecturers kept on the road in all parts of the country where general elections were pending.² Organization was thus stimulated, consistent and sustained effort was secured in the local fights, and the best which the whole party had to offer in the way of agitation and educational effort was made available wherever it seemed to be needed.³

2. The result of all this was perhaps the most important advance yet made by the Socialist party in this country—a *distinct tendency toward the establishment of a characteristic or predominant type of Socialist victory*. In the campaigns preceding the last the Socialist successes were marked by the highest degree of local diversity of character. At least seven distinct types of local Socialist victories could be distinguished.⁴ No one of these was sufficiently represented to be set down as the dominant type, and therefore considered as definitely representative of the practical character and meaning of Socialism in this country. The situation was thus ambiguous in the extreme and cast grave doubts upon the strength

¹ During the year 1911 the national office published 4,820,000 pieces of propaganda literature and financed and distributed another 1,000,000.

² During the summer a permanent Lyceum Bureau was organized at the national headquarters. This bureau did not get into practical operation till November, but it illustrates well the tendency to systematize and energize the Socialist propaganda. The bureau has a corps of twenty speakers who deliver a five-lecture course. The secretary reports that the course has already been given in more than 300 cities with an attendance of over 500,000 and a sale of propaganda literature totaling about \$100,000.

³ It is evident that the Socialists are developing singularly effective campaign machinery, and the notable fact is that this machinery runs in season and out. The Socialist party is destined evidently to repopularize politics, and to compel a revolution in the methods of their opponents.

⁴ For a description of these types see "The Rising Tide of Socialism," *Journal of Political Economy*, October, 1911.

and permanency of the Socialist movement. The November results showed a great gain in consistency. At least three of these diverse types were practically eliminated and in their place appeared a seemingly new species of Socialist success so prevalent that it can possibly be taken to indicate a strong organic tendency in the Socialist movement and to reveal in essentials what local Socialist victory¹ implies for the future. This new type may be delineated briefly as follows: It appears in industrial and transportation centers both large and small, prevailing, however, in those of moderate size. Territorially it is characteristic neither of the East nor of the West but pervades the whole industrial area. The cities in which it appears are not ethnically peculiar, though the dominant element in their population is prevailing Anglo-Saxon, Teutonic, or Scandinavian. It is the outcome of a complex combination of conditions and forces. The conditions which bring it about are both local and general. Locally it is in part a revolt against the whole range of political, social, and economic evils foisted upon American cities by self-seeking, corrupt, and inefficient political bosses and gangs and by greedy corporations; but in part also the evidence of a healthy growth of working-class organization and ideals. Generally, it rests upon a growing discontent among the workers and an ethical awakening among representatives of the well-to-do classes, induced by the feeling that high cost of living, industrial depression, and unemployment are rendering economic conditions intolerable, and that the old political parties have nothing worth while to offer toward the improvement of these conditions and have proved themselves utterly incapable of coping with them. The forces which stand back of such Socialist success and make it possible are in part proletarian and in part middle class. It is the immediate outcome of Socialist party "organization, agitation, and education," which is, however, not necessarily long continued, plus the support of a strong contingent of malcontents and sympathizers unattached to the party and largely of the middle class. It stands for greater local autonomy; for direct control of

¹ This new Socialist type closely resembles those which were represented by the victories in Milwaukee and Butte, and in fact is in a way a composite of these two, but it has also some new and distinctive features.

officials; for clean, honest, and efficient administration of affairs; for the equalization of tax burdens, the curbing of corporations, the improvement of the housing, education, and amusements of the people. It desires increase of municipal ownership and, in other ways, more direct and positive effort on the part of the civic corporation to remedy the evils of unemployment, to improve wages, to better working conditions, and to secure for the public, by general regulations, a larger measure of economic welfare. Its sponsors claim adherence to the general theory of Socialism: it gains the working-class support largely through the preaching of Socialist doctrine; but to all practical intents and purposes it is moderate, opportunistic, and reformatory. Such, in its municipal manifestation, is the type toward which American Socialism seems to be swinging.

3. *The November Socialist victories were, to a markedly greater degree than those which preceded, the results of immediate economic conditions rather than of mere political circumstance or theoretical idealism.*

Attention was called in the causal analysis of the earlier results to a type of Socialist victory which was the direct outgrowth of the class hatred engendered in industrial contests, and the despairing unrest caused by local industrial collapse. In the recent returns this type not only increased in numbers and proportion but the causes which underlay it took on a more definite and general aspect. To the passion and desire for change resulting from strikes and local depression were added as potent forces an embittered awakening to the effect on labor of improved industrial methods and a strong undercurrent of general economic discontent. High cost of living and the apparent economic impotency or blindness and callousness of the old political parties to the distress and needs of the workers were insistently repeated in explanation of Socialist successes. And it is to be noted that it was not only the members of the working class who joined the Socialist ranks in hope of some relief from these intolerable conditions. These evils brought also to the Socialist candidates a strong and growing middle-class vote of protest and sympathy.

In a previous discussion it was pointed out that "it is the

Otises, the Posts, the Parrys, the Van Cleaves, and the Kirbys who are most active in raising up revolutionary Socialism in this country." The November election returns made it equally clear that it is the union-smashing tactics of the trusts and the economic ignorance, insincerity, and callous indifference to the suffering and needs of the people which characterizes the great American game of politics that gives to the Socialist movement its life and sustenance. It was shown that if one weakens the intelligent worker's faith in the efficacy of his economic organization he turns to political action for relief. Every successful anti-union campaign, therefore, will bring into action a Socialist regiment as long as the old parties remain economically blind and archaic. Nor will mere "progressive" Republicanism or Democracy alter the fact. The worker does not want primarily "clean politics." He wants bread. And so long as the old parties advance merely along political lines or fail to concern themselves fully and sincerely with the economics of workingmen the American workers and their sympathizers will continue in increasing numbers to go over to the new party which centers its program about the bread-and-butter problem of the people.

III

If the particular strands of causation which run through the various types of recent Socialist successes be woven together, a highly interesting and significant fabric is produced. There appear the outlines of a general situation which explains the rooting and growth of the Socialist movement in this country and which seems to favor most decidedly its rapid advance in at least the immediate future. Roughly this situation may be thus described: Great numbers of American workmen and those who live on small and moderate salaries are in serious and growing distress. Prices are rising faster than money incomes. Industrial activity is noticeably slackening and employment is becoming progressively uncertain. New methods and scientific management are causing the displacement of skilled workmen and weeding out the relatively unfit. The trusts and employers' associations are proving themselves stronger than the unions and are breaking down the barriers to which organized workers have hitherto looked for the protection of their stand-

ard of living. Everywhere the workers are being roused by these conditions to a feeling that something is radically wrong and they are seeking desperately for a way out of their difficulties. Alongside and largely because of this growing working-class distress and discontent there is arising (though politicians may not be aware of it) a great ethical awakening among the comparatively well-to-do. The patriotic complacency which has marked the political and economic attitude of the fairly successful American is giving place to a strong concern for the welfare of the people and a marked disgust with the political game as it has been played. Even this successful citizen is perturbed and distressed, and is casting about for something to do to better conditions, and for an instrument with which to do it.

To both these classes the old parties in their regular organization and activity have little to offer. Nor do insurgency and progressive Republicanism hold out promise of a reasonable satisfaction of their needs and demands. The evil status is felt to rest on fundamental defects in the economic and legal constitution of things. These defects are not reached by the "direct primary" the "initiative, referendum, and recall" or by the "square deal" as interpreted in the capitalistic philosophy. A progressive economic program that ranges far beyond the problems of the trusts, the tariff, and the currency; a legal program that seeks a square deal through the radical overhauling of our whole system of rights and justice, must be adopted by the insurgents and progressives of the old parties before they can hope to appeal successfully to the worker who finds his standard of living threatened, and to his ethically aroused ally.

Upon the stage thus set comes the Socialist party. It offers to the worker, ready to grasp at any solution and means of help, a clear-cut and plausible explanation of all his difficulties and a complete program of immediate reform. It deluges him with literature stating the Socialist viewpoint in simplest and most vigorous terms, from which all difficulties and doubts are eliminated, and which damns, as cunning and sinister attempts to befog and befool him, all contradictory statements of fact and argument. It sends its speakers to him on the street. Its active propagandists draw him

into enthusiastic meetings. He is thrilled with a sense of comradeship with his fellows in a common cause. To the middle-class sympathizer all this means, if nothing more, an honest and serious attempt to comprehend and deal with the vital problem of living, to the consideration of which the old parties seem too much bound up with the game of politics to seriously attend.

And just at this point, when both worker and middle-class sympathizer are on the margin of doubt, comes into play the most important single factor in the present Socialist success, namely, the Socialist victories already achieved. These victories are proof to the worker that there is really a chance to do something to gain immediate ends through political action. His vote cast for the Socialist party is no longer a mere protest, is no longer "thrown away." He has the opportunity to put into power men committed to attempt the solution of his economic difficulties. To the middle-class man those Socialist party administrations already in operation remove what lurking fear he may have had that in helping the Socialists into power he is fostering a revolutionary and destructive organization. He sees that where the Socialists have taken office things go on much as before. The old laws are administered. Men buy and sell and contracts are enforced. Capital does not withdraw frightened out of the city. The churches continue their services. Men still cleave to their wives and families. Public education flourishes. The only immediate vital changes are that the old politicians are replaced by men who are honest and who honestly strive to give an efficient administration; that public-service corporations are forced to live up to their obligations; that the full amount of the legal tax is levied upon accumulated wealth and big business concerns; that municipal ownership and control are extended where practicable; that police power is curbed in case of industrial controversy while amicable adjustments are fostered; and that the housing, food, and working conditions of the common people become subjects of special concern to the city administration. For the worker then, on the verge of conversion and for the middle-class man on the margin of doubt, these pioneer Socialist victories turn the scale. They are the final and most potent Socialistic argument. To them, without doubt, is to be attributed more

than to any other single factor the great Socialist gains of last November.

Under these circumstances the wonder is not that the Socialist party won so many victories in the last campaign but that it did not win more. The causes of its failure to do so lie largely in the organic character and administration of the movement itself and concern vitally its future possibilities. The party is struggling to reconcile democracy and efficiency in the conduct of its own affairs. It is increasingly hampered by the problem of unification and education of its own membership. Socialist sentiment on the whole seems to be gaining ground faster than the party can organize and make use of it. The movement moreover is much better organized for the task of conversion than for that of efficient and constructive activity. The party has yet to be judged on its public record. Aside from two or three conspicuous cases it has not been in power long enough to indicate to the public its ability to make good, nor to the workers its ability to make good *as a proletarian organization*. The supreme test of the movement is therefore still to come. On the outcome of this test will, in the main, depend the immediate future of the movement as a real political power.¹

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¹ The term immediate future as here used does not refer to the coming nine months. The movement will doubtless proceed during this period on the momentum already acquired.